

USAF Talking Points

F/A-22 Raptor

August 2005

Themes, messages and selected quotes from senior leaders and others, highlighting the F/A-22 Raptor capabilities, production status, business case, and modernization.

Overarching Theme:

The F/A-22 is the key enabler to help establish Joint Air Dominance quickly. It is critical to have sufficient numbers to ensure success for future Joint operations. The Raptor is a transformational combat aircraft ready to counter persistent and emerging national security challenges for decades. Its capabilities create desired effects when, where, and for the duration they are needed. The Raptor is the best value for the money today, and it's the only fighter ready to defeat the threats of tomorrow.

Key Sub-Themes:

- F/A-22 is a key capability for continued joint air dominance
- F/A-22 is a superior rapid strike platform with persistent surveillance capability not replicated by any other combat aircraft
- F/A-22 is fielding cutting edge technology today
- A quantity of 381 Raptors is the most efficient and effective use of taxpayers' money and provides greater capability with decreased unit costs
- F/A-22 is fulfilling national security requirements in the 21st century

Key Messages:

- Several foreign fighter aircraft, current and anticipated fifth generation, surpass legacy US aircraft capabilities. Only the Raptor stands ready to counter these current and emerging challenges.
- The F/A-22 is a transformational combat aircraft that is effectively invisible to threats, cruises at supersonic speeds, is highly maneuverable, and provides the joint force an unprecedented level of integrated situational awareness information from its onboard sensors...in contested airspace.
- The F/A-22 is critical for joint force operations across the spectrum of conflict. It advances defense of the homeland against air and surface attack and joint force operations in heavily defended environments.
- F/A-22 missions include suppression or destruction of enemy air defenses, precision strike, maritime interdiction, counterair, and cruise missile defense.
- The F/A-22 is flying today--38 Raptors are currently flying, with 40 more under construction. It's a multi-role aircraft capable of attacking ground and air targets and accomplishing non-traditional ISR. F/A-22 combat capability will be available to the joint force commander by December 2005.
- The F/A-22 is the best value for the money today. The average "sticker price" for remaining Raptors in a 381-quantity buy is \$106 million. Program cuts increase the "sticker price" due to reduction in economies of scale.

- Purchasing 381 Raptors precludes the need to buy more than 800 additional new, but less capable, legacy aircraft to replace the aging fleet, provides more capability, lowers operating and support costs, and allows legacy aircraft to be retired. An inventory of 381 Raptors balances investment, combat capability and acceptable risk...any reductions will increase risk.
- The F/A-22 modernization program optimizes future capabilities and ensures overwhelming U.S. advantage against future national security challenges. Funded upgrades will enhance electronic attack, stealth and network centric capabilities and provide the ability to attack surface moving targets in all weather. Additional future upgrades will enhance capabilities for persistent C4ISR and rapid strike.

What Senior Leaders are saying:

- So those who continue to insist that the F/A-22 is all about dogfighting obsolete Soviet airplanes are just flat wrong. It's about being able to dominate the airspace and gain access to airspace around the world wherever it might be. (CSAF, Jan 05)
- We went up [in F/A-22s] and flew against F-15s and against a surface-to-air missile complex that was one of these modern surface-to-air missiles, and with two of us, nothing ever saw us. So the capability that we foresee in the F/A-22 is one that I think puts us ahead for the 10, 15 and 20 years from now time frame where we will see the continued proliferation of these things that will contest airspace, remembering that contested airspace can be above any activity we're trying to pursue, including the pursuit of terrorist activity. (CSAF, Feb 05)
- Now I do have it on very good authority that the F/A-22's avionics are superior. It maneuvers like a dream. Supercruise is unbelievable stuff. This aircraft will guarantee our air dominance and give our joint forces unparalleled freedom of action. So we're taking them as fast as the factory can turn them out right now and we hope to continue to do so. (Acting SECAF, Feb 05)
- We view the F/A-22 as our kick down the door force. Its combination of stealth and speed and integrated avionics allows it to penetrate into the double digit SAMs against very high end fighters, and it gets the first look, the first shot, the first kill, both air-to-ground, and air-to-air. There's no other airplane that's going to be able to do that. So, we see this as the lead force that then enables the rest of the joint force, including our JSFs and any of our other legacy airplanes. That's what it was designed to do, and that's what it's proving itself to do in testing. (AF/XO, Mar 05)
- What you have in a flight of two or a flight of four F/A-22s is a combination of what we do now on a Rivet Joint with signals intelligence and an AWACS with radar work that you can put that information into a net and increase the situational awareness of an operating theater by hundreds of percent orders of magnitude. Now, why don't we do that? It's that sort of capability that exists today or that is coming on board today that we need to take full advantage of and get out of the platform-oriented stovepipe thinking that we're a part of. (CSAF, Apr 05)

What pilots flying the F/A-22 have said:

- The Raptor is a pilot's dream. It is easy to operate, nearly invisible to the enemy, provides the pilot with 360-degree situational awareness and it's FAST!
- The Raptor can perform almost every step in the kill chain [FIND-FIX-TRACK-TARGET-ENGAGE-ASSESS] using its onboard sensors. This result is a shorter kill chain and a higher probability of success on a fluid battlefield.

- There is no match for the situational awareness that we saw... When you combine this with the low observability of the airplane, it's going to be hard for any airplane to be able to see us in any scenario that we can imagine.
- It [F/A-22] is faster, more maneuverable and more lethal than any current fighter or any one we know of on the drawing board. The information gathering capability is eye watering. The stealth is next generation, allowing the Raptor to do things that even the B-2 and F-117 can't. This makes it much more than a "fighter."